

**Evaluation of Fall 2015 ENGRD/ENGWR 299 -
“Reading and Writing Skills for College”**

CRC Research Office

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Background

This mid-year report provides an evaluation of Cosumnes River College's ENGWR and ENGRD 299 accelerated English courses in fall 2015. Two sections of accelerated college-level English – one in ENGWR 299 and the other in ENGRD 299 – were offered. These 4-unit courses are intended to prepare students for transfer-level English courses (ENGWR 300 and ENGRD 310) and to accelerate students to transfer-level. Some students enrolled in these courses may have been placed below college-level; therefore, a student assistant (SA) was assigned to each accelerated course to provide additional academic support to students. The evaluation of ENGRD 299 and ENGWR 299 was designed to answer the following research questions:

- 1) Do students with different English assessment test results perform differentially within ENGRD 299 and ENGWR 299? Do students who previously took a lower level English course perform differentially compared to students who did not?
- 2) How well do students in ENGRD 299 and ENGWR 299 perform compared to students enrolled in traditional ENGWR 101 and ENGRD 110?
- 3) How well do students who passed ENGRD 299/ENGWR 299 perform in subsequent ENGWR 300 and ENGRD 310 or 312 courses compared to students that took and passed ENGWR 101 and ENGRD 110?

To answer these research questions, the Research Office collected data from two sources: student records (enrollment, assessment, and student demographic data) and student attendance with student assistants.

Overview of Findings

Two sections of accelerated college-level English (ENGRD 299 and ENGWR 299) – were offered in fall 2015. Each section enrolled 27 students ($N=54$). The overall success rate for the courses was 64.8% (51.9%, ENGRD 299; 77.8%, ENGWR 299). This evaluation suggests ENGRD/ENGWR 299 has the potential to accelerate students to transfer-level English based on the following findings:

- There was no statistically significant difference in ENGRD/ENGWR 299 course success rates based on students' writing placement levels. There also was no statistically significant difference between students who had or had not completed a previous English course at the college.
- Students in ENGRD/ENGWR 299 were more likely to be placed at below college-level writing than students in ENGWR 101/ENGRD 110 (64.8% vs. 21.9%). However, there was no statistical significance between the success rates of students in ENGRD/ENGWR 299 and students in ENGWR 101/ENGRD 110 ($p>.05$). The lack of statistical significance in success may be attributed to the additional support provided through ENGRD/ENGWR 299 student assistants. In fact, ENGRD/ENGWR 299 students who used SA achieved a higher success rate than their classmates who did not (77.8% vs. 50.0%) although this difference was not statistically significant ($p>.05$).

Research Questions and Findings

Do students with different English assessment test results perform differentially within ENGRD 299 and ENGWR 299?

Students who assessed into below college-level English and did not previously pass any English courses at Cosumnes River College succeeded in ENGRD/ENGWR 299 at a lower rate than their peers (50.0% vs. 77.8%). This difference, however, was not statistically significant ($p>.05$), possibly due to low sample sizes ($N=23$). It should be noted that the 50% success rate of students who placed below college-level is

still higher than the progression rate of students who start in below college-level English courses ([California Community College Chancellor's Office – DataMart, Basic Skills Cohort Progress Tracker](#)).

Do students who previously took a lower level English course perform differentially compared to students who did not?

Students who previously passed a lower level English course ($N=27$) succeeded in ENGRD/ENGWR 299 at a higher rate than their peers who did not (74.1% vs. 56%). However, this difference was not statistically significant ($p>.05$), possibly due to low sample sizes.

How well do students in ENGRD 299 and ENGWR 299 perform compared to students enrolled in traditional ENGWR 101 and ENGRD 110?

Students in ENGRD/ENGWR 299 achieved a lower average course success rate than their ENGWR 101/ENGRD 110 peers within their respective English courses (64.8% vs. 71.1%); however, this difference was not statistically significant ($p>.05$). Therefore, there is a great opportunity for students to accelerate because ENGRD/ENGWR 299 students did not appear to have statistically significantly lower success rates.

How well do students who passed ENGRD299/ENGWR 299 perform in subsequent ENGWR 300 and ENGRD 310 or 312 courses compared to students that took and passed ENGWR 101 and ENGRD 110?

At this time, data for success rates in subsequent ENGWR 300 and ENGRD 310 or 312 are not yet available. This research question will be addressed after spring 2016 final grades are finalized. Almost two-thirds (62.9%) of the ENGRD/ENGWR 299 students enrolled in a transfer-level English course compared to 56% of ENGWR 101/ENGRD 110 students; however, this difference was not statistically significant ($p>.05$).

Limitations

Given that the evaluation period was one semester and the number of accelerated college-level English courses was constrained to two sections, the sample sizes were likely too small to find significant differences between groups. Additionally, many of the students who enrolled in the accelerated courses were recruited by the faculty teaching the courses and may not be representative of the below college-level student population. However, these limitations do not diminish the general observation that the accelerated course may help accelerate students who would traditionally start below college-level in English courses.

Recommendations

Continued evaluation of the accelerated English course is needed to increase the sample size and to determine whether the accelerated course adequately prepares students for ENGWR 300, ENGRD 310, and 312. If findings here are replicated in future evaluations, then the English department and the Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences may want to consider increasing the number of course offerings for accelerated college-level English and provide each section academic support through the student assistant program.

Method

In February 2016, enrollment and assessment data were pulled for students enrolled in ENGRD/ENGWR 299 and the comparison group (students enrolled in ENGWR 101 and ENGRD 110) in fall 2015. These data include the students' official grades in their fall 2015 English courses, demographic background (ethnicity, gender, and age), previous below college-level English courses completed, most recent and valid assessment results, and spring 2016 enrollment in transfer-level English courses.

During the fall 2015 semester, student assistants (SA) assigned to the ENGWR/ENGRD 299 sections tracked students' visits using attendance spreadsheets created by the Research Office. The attendance files recorded the date of the session, the names and IDS of the students who enrolled, and section number. Students' visits with the student assistants were appended to the previously described dataset. The median number of visits per ENGRWR/ENGRD 299 student who visited the SA was 4. (The median was used because of the large number of students who visited SI once and a student who visited their SA more than 20 times.)

Table 1 below displays the characteristic differences between the ENGRD/ENGWR 299 students and students enrolled in ENGWR 101 or ENGRD 110 in fall 2015. Given the small number of students represented in the ENGWR/ENGRD 299 courses, comparisons made with the larger ENGWR 101 and ENGRD 110 students should be interpreted with caution. Students who were between 20 to 24 years old, African American, Hispanic/Latino, placed below college-level English, or previously completed a below college-level English course represented a noticeably larger proportion in ENGWR/ENGRD 299 than in ENGWR 101 and ENGRD 110.

Table 1. *Fall 2015 Student Characteristics – Comparisons between ENGWR/ENGRD 299 and ENGWR 101/ENGRD 110 students*

Fall 2015 Student Demographic Characteristics	ENGWR/ENGRD 299	ENGWR 101/ENGRD 110	Difference
Gender			
Female	55.6%	53.3%	2.3%
Male	40.7%	44.6%	-3.9%
Unknown	3.7%	2.1%	1.6%
Ethnicity/Race			
African American	22.2%	13.2%	9.0%
Asian	18.5%	30.1%	-11.6%
Filipino	7.4%	4.2%	3.2%
Hispanic/Latino	42.6%	31.0%	11.6%
Multi-Race	1.9%	5.1%	-3.2%
Native American/Alaskan Native	0.0%	0.4%	-0.4%
Pacific Islander	0.0%	2.5%	-2.5%
Unknown	0.0%	1.2%	-1.2%
White	7.4%	12.3%	-4.9%
Age Group			
19 or younger	38.9%	52.2%	-13.4%
20-24	46.3%	30.1%	16.2%
25 or older	14.8%	17.7%	-2.8%

Fall 2015 Student Demographic Characteristics	ENGWR/ENGRD 299	ENGWR 101/ENGRD 110	Difference
Assessment Levels			
No test	16.7%	12.6%	4.1%
Below College-level	64.8%	21.9%	43.0%
College-level or higher	18.5%	65.1%	-46.6%
Previously Completed a Below College-Level English Course	50.0%	18.9%	31.1%
Average Course Success Rate	64.8%	71.1%	-6.3%
Median Number of SA Visits (ENGWR/ENGRD 299 ONLY)	4	N/A	

Total Number of Students	54	668
Data sources: ENGRD/ENGWR 299 student assistants' Attendance files; LRCCD Student Information System (PeopleSoft), February 24, 2016		

Table 2 displays the student assistant (SA) participation rate by course (ENGWR 299 and ENGRD 299), and the success outcomes by SA participation status. Overall, the participation rate for the ENGWR/ENGRD 299 courses was 75%; the participation rate is based on the 48 students whose visits were tracked in the attendance files. Generally, the students who sought help from the student assistants achieved a higher average success rate in each of the courses. However, these differences were not statistically significant ($X^2(1) = 2.15, ns$).

Table 2. SA Participation Rates and Success Outcomes by Course

Course	Number of Students	Number of SA Participants	Participation Rate	SA Participant Success Rate	Non-SA Participant Success Rate ¹	Difference (SA – Non-SA) ²	Overall Success Rate
ENGRD 299	23	12	52.2%	58.3%	54.5%	3.8%	56.5%
ENGWR 299	25	24	96.0%	87.5%	—	—	84.0%
Total³	48	36	75.0%	77.8%	50.0%	27.8%	70.8%

¹If fewer than 10 students, success rate not shown.

²Not enough data to test for statistically significant differences between courses.

³Represents the 48 students whose SA visits were tracked – missing data for 6 of the students.

Data sources: ENGRD/ENGWR 299 student assistants' Attendance files; LRCCD Student Information System (PeopleSoft), February 24, 2016

Analysis (Technical Specifications)

Initially, a logistic regression model, assuming a quasibinomial error term (commonly used to test for differences in binomial outcome variable), was used to predict the probability of course success from students' previous completion of below college-level English courses. Students' success in ENGRD/ENGWR 299 was not significantly predicted by whether or not a student previously completed a below college-level English course, $t(1) = -1.227, ns$.

After controlling for previous completion of below college-level level English courses, a logistic regression model, again assuming a quasibinomial error term, was used to predict the probability of course success from students' writing placement in English courses. Students' success in ENGRD/ENGWR 299 was not significantly predicted by their English assessment level, $t(1) = 0.874, ns$.

A logistic regression model, assuming a quasibinomial error term, was used to compare the probability of course success in the traditional (ENGWR 101/ENGRD 110) courses to that of the accelerated (ENGRD/ENGWR 299) courses. There was no significant difference in the probability of success between the traditional and accelerated courses, $t(1) = -0.973$, *ns*.

Lastly, a logistic regression model, assuming a quasibinomial error term, was used to compare the probability of subsequent enrollment in a transfer-level English course between students enrolled in the accelerated courses (ENGRD/ENGWR 299) and students enrolled in the traditional college level English courses (ENGWR 101/ENGRD 110). There was no statistically significant difference in subsequent enrollment in transfer-level English between students in the accelerated English course and their peers in the traditional college-level English course, $t(1) = -0.786$, *ns*.